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CYCLING: LANCE FURY AT GREG JIBE

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TOUR de France champion Lance Armstrong has hit back at remarks from Greg **LeMond,** the only other American to win the Tour, about his controversial relationship with Italian doctor Michele Ferrari.

LeMond said: "Ferrari is a cancer in sports and it's sad that Lance has had a five-year relationship with him."

Armstrong said of his comments: "I was upset - I was surprised more than anything."

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Black & White Photo: Greg LeMond ;

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HOUSTON'S LEADING INFORMATION SOURCE
HoustonChronicle.com

LeMond late with apology:[3 STAR Edition]

JAYNE CUSTRED. Houston Chronicle. Houston, Tex.:Aug 16, 2001. p. B.12

Abstract (Summary)

Of course, [Greg LeMond] is now saying that his comments about three- time Tour de France champion Lance Armstrong's relationship with Italian doctor Michele Ferrari were taken out of context. But he should have known that the cycling community would not take lightly any slight on Armstrong's character, not even from a legend like LeMond.

Even if LeMond was truly concerned about Armstrong's relationship with Ferrari, it was an issue that should have been taken care of privately, between the two men. Instead, LeMond came off sounding like a poor sport for questioning the ethics of a man who has never tested positive for a banned substance in his entire career.

Armstrong, for his part, refused to get drawn into a name-calling contest with LeMond, saying only that LeMond was and would always be one of his "heroes," and that he was "surprised" by LeMond's remarks. Armstrong has also made it clear that he believes Ferrari to be innocent of the drug charges and would "re-evaluate" his relationship with the physician only if Ferrari is found guilty of any wrongdoing.

Full Text (690 words)

Copyright Houston Chronicle Publishing Company Division, The Hearst Corporation (the "Houston Chronicle") Aug 16, 2001

Greg LeMond should have known better.

Of course, LeMond is now saying that his comments about three- time Tour de France champion Lance Armstrong's relationship with Italian doctor Michele Ferrari were taken out of context. But he should have known that the cycling community would not take lightly any slight on Armstrong's character, not even from a legend like LeMond.

After being publicly criticized for the past few weeks for his negative remarks about Armstrong's association with Ferrari, whose name has been linked to drug use in the sport, LeMond issued a long overdue apology to Armstrong on Tuesday.

"I sincerely regret that some of my remarks . . . seemed to question the veracity of Lance's performances," LeMond said. "I want to be clear that I believe Lance to be a great champion and I do not believe, in any way, that he has ever used any performance enhancing substances."

That's a bit different from the tune LeMond was singing during the first of August, when he publicly refused to applaud Armstrong for his efforts in the Tour de France.

When asked about Armstrong's accomplishments, LeMond told a London newspaper: "In light of Lance's relationship with Ferrari, I just don't want to comment on this year's Tour. This is not sour grapes. I'm just disappointed with Lance."

It might not have been sour grapes, but it sure sounded like it. LeMond, after all, was the first American to win the Tour de France three times. And while his victories certainly earned LeMond a place in history among the all-time greats in the sport, he didn't receive the same crush of attention or support from mainstream sports fans that Armstrong is enjoying.

Even if LeMond was truly concerned about Armstrong's relationship with Ferrari, it was an issue that should have been taken care of privately, between the two men. Instead, LeMond came off sounding like a poor sport for questioning the ethics of a man who has never tested positive for a banned substance in his entire career.

Armstrong, for his part, refused to get drawn into a name-calling contest with LeMond, saying only that LeMond was and would always be one of his "heroes," and that he was "surprised" by LeMond's remarks. Armstrong has also made it clear that he believes Ferrari to be innocent of the drug charges and would "re-evaluate" his relationship with the physician only if Ferrari is found guilty of any wrongdoing.

As for LeMond's apology, there's little doubt that Armstrong will once again show what kind of character he has by accepting it, however late it was in coming.

On the road again - Lance Armstrong will be out of the country for the next few weeks competing in three events overseas, including the Ronde van Nederland on Aug. 28-Sept. 1. He will return to the United States in time to take part in the San Francisco Grand Prix 2001 on Sept. 9.

The San Francisco Grand Prix is part of the 2001 Pro Cycling Tour that comes to Houston on Sept. 16 with the BMC Software Tour of Houston.

Hot time - One of the state's biggest cycling events will be held Aug. 23-26 in Wichita Falls, when cyclists will gather for the Hotter 'n Hell Hundred.

The event was started in 1982, when Wichita Falls was planning its Centennial Celebration. The local cycling club came up with the idea of hosting a 100-mile ride in the 100-degree weather to celebrate 100 years. Through the years the event has grown to become the second largest sanctioned century ride in the United States.

Scheduled activities for the long weekend include a consumer show and series of meetings. The Texas Bicycle Coalition will hold its annual membership meeting on Aug. 24 in Wichita Falls. It will be followed by the 2001 Texas Bike Summit, which is open to all cycling clubs, bike shop owners and representatives, event directors and other leaders of the Texas bicycling community.

The Hotter 'n Hell Hundred will begin at 7:30 a.m. on Aug. 25.

For information, access the Hotter 'n Hell Hundred through the Texas Bicycle Coalition Web site at BikeTexas.org.

Credit: Staff

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USATODAY.com

LeMond back-pedals on Armstrong quotes:[FINAL Edition]
Don Cronin. USA TODAY. McLean, Va.:Aug 15, 2001. p. C.07

Abstract (Summary)
[Greg LeMond], the first U.S. winner of the Tour, shocked cycling fans when he cast doubt on the integrity of [Lance Armstrong]'s third consecutive victory, telling the Sunday Times of London he was "devastated" that Armstrong had associated with physician Michele Ferrari, who is awaiting trial in Italy for providing performance-enhancing drugs to athletes.

After being read LeMond's latest comments, Armstrong told USA TODAY, "It is nice to hear there was a clarification. I've always had a lot of respect for Greg as a rider and for what he's done for our sport. I respect and appreciate him even more for going out of his way to say that. I didn't have hard feelings before he made the statement and don't have them now."

Armstrong said he didn't think LeMond was pressured to make the statement by Trek Bicycles, which makes LeMond's self-named bike and is a major sponsor of Armstrong and the U.S. Postal Service cycling team.